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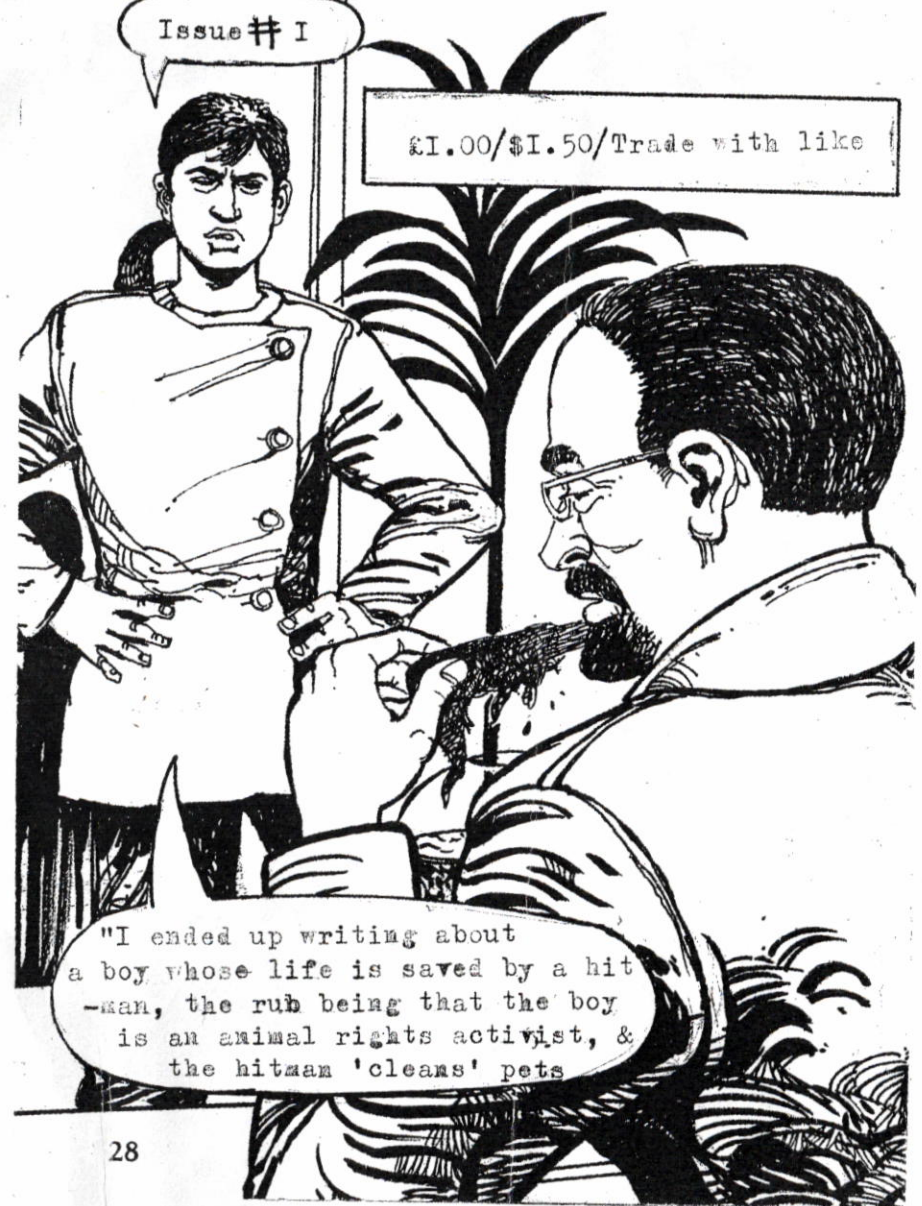
OR

Beth Tilston
Greendale
Ridley Lane
Mawdesley
Lancs
L40 3SX

All My Heroes Are Virgins

Issue #1

£1.00/\$1.50/Trade with like



Mawdesley
Lancs
L40 3SX
England

Or Bobbims2000@hotmail.com

XX

Contributors
.....
Beth Tilston
Laura Smith

Psychedelic Drugs

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I reckon the next issue of 'All my Heroes are Virgins' is 4
gonna be the "nature" issue. I say I reckon, because I'm not
sure that I can fill a 40 page zine with stories about walkin'
in the woods. Still, I'll give it my very best shot. If you
've got any stories or suggestions then you know where to sen
them. Could be any kind of nature. Naturism perhaps?

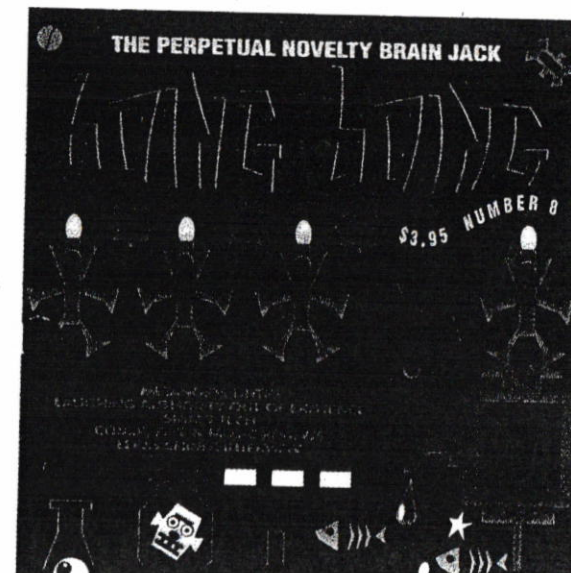
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This is just a plug for my friends zine. It's called 'Varla's
Passed Out Again' and it's a riot of riotgrrl madness. If yo
are interested, then get in touch with me, and I'll pass
your message on. FYI, 'Varla' ~~KAT~~ features a comic strip
called "Ghost World" (Rip-off title I know) done by me. It's
very good, if I do say so myself.

XX

X I wanna write a story about defunct tube stations in London
and New York. If anyone knows anything about this, could the
get in touch with me. Apparently, if you talk to the Subway
authorities in NYC, they'll give you a tour of all the station
s that ~~XXXX~~ they have closed down. Is this a fallacy, d'ya
reckon?

XX



soft and blurry edged, but big and flat, like lifting up
your shirt and lying on warm, rough concrete in summer, let-
ting your belly heat up and daring yourself to stay there
longer."

I ended up writing about a boy whose life is saved by a hit
man, the rub being that the boy is an animal rights activist,
and the hitman specialises in 'cleaning' pets."

When do we start doing all the cool stuff I heard about when
was a kid? Who keeps a check on our lives when we are asle-
ep? I want to be a writer living in a warm roomy shed
with a glass roof in Canada, but who can I tell this to?"

Have you ever met anyone in a club/pub maybe, & in only 30
minutes you know for sure that you'll never find someone like
that again? You'll never see a jawline like that, never anot-
her person who wears their glasses in the same way, and you'll
certainly never see mint flavoured lip gloss in the same
light"

Last night was the first time anyone has ever said 'call me'"

Nothing happens for about 6 months and then, as if in a gorge-
ous 1930's film, she appears, stunning"

She thought I was dishing out the silent treatment. I knew
was just giving my face a rest"

There are young people right now nursing broken hearts and
lasses of whiskey, both filled with ice I might add, looking
over sprawling city scapes ~~xxx~~ wishing beyond wish that there
is a single field to see. And equally young and emotionally
imaged humans sitting ~~xxx~~ listlessly in countryside bus-stops
hoping that this will be the early morning trip to school
that stands out only because of the lack of bullying, that
this will be the day that sees sunshine"

They had woken to find themselves attached, like a twist on
an urban myth when someone wakes in a post-gin haze to find a
daisy missing"

Exerpts from the emails of an urban poet that I have never
et.

Introduction to Issue #1

It was Andy Warhol who first gave me the idea
to make a zine. Standing in the Factory one
day, while some of his lackies covered the
walls with tin foil, he turned and stared at me
with his watery blue eyes and said,
"I've found the next new thing that I'm gonna
do"

"What's that" I asked while simultaneously
eyebrow flirting with a tall skinny boy of
dubious orientation who was eight foot up a
rickety wooden ladder.

"I'm gonna make a little book, and write down
all of my opinions and stuff in it, and write
stories, and a bunch of people will read it and
tell me what they think"

"But Andy", I replied "You don't have any
opinions, you pinched them off other people!"

"Then I'll get someone else to make it for me"

"What's it gonna be called, this little book?"

"I wanna name it after a hero, a real strong
man, a real cowboy man, but all my heroes are
virgins"

"Maybe you should just drop the idea"

"Yeah, I'm famous now, I don't need to do
anything else. Hey someone even tried to kill
me"

The next day, I pawned my record player to buy
myself a typewriter. The P and the F didn't
work, and I couldn't play Hendrix any more, but
hey, I got this to you. I feel bad about what
I did to Andy, but he did enough stuff in his
life time. I reckon it's about time I got me
some.

Love Beth xxx

Colouring Competition



Super Prizes to the person who colours this picture the most creatively. Prizes could include: A Murder Mystery Whodunit Book, Smarties and a sloppy kiss from me.

Erotic Story Competition:

I want an erotic story in 500-1000 words. Nothing illegal or just generally sick, but ya can be as risqué as you want. Six foot drag queens invade a nunnery. Scientists get randy in a time machine. Get your smutty hats on. I'll print as many as I can in #2. No prizes for this one. I imagine you'll get your kicks just fulfilling the brief!

Quote Competition: An easy one to ease you in...

"I fuck arses? Who fucks arses? Maybe he fucks arses. Maybe he's written this in some moment of drunken sincerity? I'm in considerable danger here. I must get out of here at once..."

Answers to address on the back cover...

much dope at that. A triangle call with Dresdner Bank is scheduled tomorrow at 6:30 A.M. plus an interview with Skye's teachers at 8:00 P.M. back in Massachusetts.

A lonely gulp of cola.

Strange how when you're young you have no memories. The one day you wake up and boom, memories overpower all else in your life, forever making the present moment seem sad and unable to complete with a glorious past that now has a life of its own.

Skye says, "Dad, you always complain people my age never protest about anything, but the first moment we even try and make a peep, you ex-hippies are the first to slam us, saying we're nowhere near as passionate or effective as you were in the fucking sixties. Make up your minds. Stop making us have to subsidize your disillusionment with the way you turned out."

Ouch.

Ben reclines and watches galaxial splashings of Bic lighters span the darkened Coliseum's seats. He knows the music will be ending soon. And he wonders - with fear and confusion and a sense of loss - about the alien planet on which tonight's spaceship will be landing.



Ben scans the freaks. Koo-koo survivors. Casualties. Ben doesn't consider himself a casualty, but he knows a fraction of his linear thinking capacity has been lost because of his tripping. But maybe non-linearity has helped him with his defense-related computer work. Ben's daughter, Skye, says he's a spaz. "You can't be your age, go to Dead shows and not be a broken person," she says. Nineties children are so hard.

Ben, like most of the older Deadheads at tonight's concert, is wearing a genuine article of 1960's culture, a T-shirt saying H E L L O S A N F R A N C I S C O - P L E A S E I D E N T I F Y Y O U R S E L F. No need for anyone here to know he has bank accounts in Luxembourg.

Skye says hippies dress randomly, like drifters or bag people. "Scary. If you have to wear that sixties hippy shit, coordinate it please." Skye's own neo-sixties fashion theories of calculated randomness purchased from the local mall seem to have strayed from the true essence of hippy couture. "The sixties were about who you were", Ben told Skye, "not about what you looked like." "Take a bath, Dad."

At the suggestion that she attend tonight's show, Skye rolled her eyes and plunked a new Pet Shop Boys CD into her CD-Man, then elevated down to the Mark Hopkins lobby in search of celebrities. So instead, Ben attended the concert with Allan, an old pal from the Fillmore West era now working as a vascular surgeon in Millbrae. Allan left at halftime: "Great show Ben, have to split though - replacing an alcoholic's veins in the morning. Call you soon."

Sigh. Even the bikers are gone these days, and Skye was right - the aging holdouts are starting to look like cartoon versions of themselves - Freak Brother-esque beards and denims; Mansonian love-god pantaloons with tattoos and rainbow wear. Dead shows are like a theme parks, Dad" Skye says. "Groovy-world."

And everybody's so poor these days, too. It was so popular or decades to bash the middle class and then suddenly, pffft, the middle class evaporated, and now Ben misses it dreadfully. Nonetheless, just because other people are poor doesn't mean we shouldn't try to hang on to one's own wealth. Let's be sensible. Ben gives to panhandlers, even though they seem more like moochers these days. Just when and how did the world become so polarized?

Another sigh. Dope, not acid for Ben this evening, and not



THE CHICKEN? OR THE EGG?

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED



If you have any stories, poems,
recipies, plays, pix or anything else,
please send them to the address
inside the front cover (also on back
of zine)

YOU CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT YOU CHOSE TO FORGET

This is a short story by Douglas Coupland, my absolute favourite writer. No one tell him that this story's here, or else I'm in big trouble. It can be found in 'Polaroids From The Dead'. ISBN 0-00-654860-1

Software has rained money on Ben. He has amassed a California fortune that hums like crickets on Ronald Reagan's xx ranch on a summers day. Thankyou Bendix. Thankyou Morton Thiokol. Thankyou, GE, Bechtel, Raytheon, Amara, Honeywell and Motorola.

Ben can even forget about the pair of \$650 Bally Suisse Brogues ruined waiting in line for tonight's concert, shoes he purchased just this afternoon in San Francisco after sifting through his T-bills in the Bank of America VIP vault. He xx should have known better. Last night, flying in from Boston the pilot asked the passengers to pray for rain - an odd intrusion - of the mystical world into the secular. The pilot said that a storm dallying off the coast was trying to make up its mind whether to swing around inland.

Because of the rain and his wet shoes, Ben can now de-sock with the rest of the Deadheads without feeling guilty - guilty that his wealth precludes his continued Membership in the sixties culture of his youth, an era he now views through the AT&T commercial soft-focus lens: xx a mutt puppy chewing Crazy Susan's shawl outside the Avalon Ballroom; sun sets over Daly City viewed from San Bruno, with microdot-freak chatter inside the bus sounding like Charlie Brown's teachers; nibbling daisy petals in mellow Leandra's polished redwood Edwardian Kleenex box of a house in Menlo Park; getting naked on Muir Beach.

Dead concerts. Without them, the sixties would be extinct. Ben has used his money to follow the Dead around the world over the past years: Cairo, Dijon, Lille, Boulder, Rotterdam ... pursuing that era, refusing to let it die.

Ben remembers an old science fiction movie he once saw, silent running, in which earth had been nuked and a spaceshi - an ark- loaded with seeds and trees, travelled the univers in serch of a new planet to call home. Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum tonight feels like that spacecraft - the '60's being the dead planet and the young Deads - the seeds



JOHN PEEL

This is a transcript of an actual e-chat that I had with John Peel. Actually! I am regretting asking such an inane question. No I'm not. Anyway, here you are.

(Question from) (Beth Tilston): Do you have a big female fan-base, 'cos I think you are a total fox....

(John Peel): They must have confused me with someone else! How do you answer that? I'm just a fat old, 62 year old bloke.

(John Peel): So the answer is no

(John Peel): I have a photograph of myself with the DJ Jeff Mills.

(John Peel): I look like some dodgy European businessman, who's found himself a cute malaysian boy for the night.

(John Peel): I keep it by my side as a reminder of what I really look like.

A wise man indeed....



"You start then"

"Do I have to?"

"Yeah"

"Ok"

"Go on"

"I'm thinking,... Brian Blessed"

"Goog, but you know, you really shouldn't have gone for a double letter name on your first go"

"Just give an answer, or drink your bloody drink"

"Ok, FINE... Bob Marley"

"What's that, M, Mel Smith."

"Who?, your mate from down the road"

"No the fucking comedian you fucking retard, as in Smith Jones."

"Sly Stallone, ah ha, right back atcha"

"Sharon Stone"

"Susan Sontag"

"What, you can't have fucking Susan Sontag"

"Why not?, more than two people have heard of her, and name begins with an S"

"This game's supposed to be about fucking pop culture, not Susan fucking Sontag"

"Fine then, we'll stop playing"

Silence.

"So this is what you want to do is it? just sit around here and not say anything?"

"Suits me"

"Fine"

"Fine"

"Oh do FUCK off PLEASE"

"Steven Spielberg"

Zines

Nine Lives
by Beth.

1

Rio De Janero, Brazil

I am going to catch total shit when I come down. I'm that bratty little sister of mine will have ratted on me by now. You see, I met this guy on the beach. I thought he was a bit of a sleaze really. He was one of those old time Brazilians, with greased hair and sharp suits and a dangerous look about them. All the guys nowadays wear Tommy Hilfiger. He said that he owned a plane, and would I like to fly in it with him? I replied "You want me to come and see your cockpit?" and he smiled, so I went with him. It turned out that he actually did own a plane, so that's where we are now. He let take the controls, but then it all went a bit crazy so he took them back again. He asked me how old I was and I said "21" and hoped that he couldn't see that I was lying. My Mamma wouldn't understand why I wanted to fly in the plane. She would think it was 'cos the sleaze was paying me, but it wasn't. I just wanted to be able to look down on my city. Not many people get the chance to see everything clearly. I am glad that I took it.

Los Angeles, USA

I became famous so that I could get to know Morrissey. There are no two ways about it. That is that harsh reality. He got under my skin one day when I was about 16 and he never really left. I suppose everything I did was geared towards that day that I would meet him, and he would be my friend. I tried a few careers, but finally decided that photography was the one for me. And that is what I am doing in this LA street today. Waiting to take pictures of Steven Morrissey. I should say though, I'm pretty respected. People, famous people ask for me to take their pictures. You probably know some of the pictures that I have taken.

And how am I feeling you may ask? Well, strange. For one, I can't actually believe that he exists and that he walks in the street. Maybe he'll send his alien brother or something. Shit, here he comes.

"Hi, I'm Morrissey"

"I'm Jack"

My friend and I are going to the lake-district for the week end. We are gonna walk over some hills, despite the fact that neither of us have a clue how to read a map. I expect we'll make it by using the old, "I'm a girl and I'm los technique. It's hardly full-on feminism, but you know, it works, and we might even get a pint of bitter out of it. I suggested that we walk from Ambleside to Keswick, but then noticed that that was about 40 miles, and encompassed several large and difficult fells. We belong to the wandering lounl; as a cloud school of walking. Amble along for three or four miles, stop for a pint of milk and a look at the church. Amble along for a few more miles. Get lost, thank god for our quality knitwear, ask a middle aged couple where we are, follow

I've just started going to weight-watchers. God, it making me really hungry. I never used to really take any notice of what I ate. Now that I have to think about calories and points all the time, it's making it worse. If you always thinking about food, you're gonna wanna eat it, aren't you? I'm trying to convince myself that boiled cauliflower as tasty as a brie baguette, but it just isn't is it? St I will be sylph-like. I've been a bloater for too long.

I am now gainfully employed. The humourless ginger man who shouted at me in the manner of an irate farmer has just rung u p. Apparently, they were 'pleased with my performance in the interview yesterday', and would like ~~in~~ me to complement their work-force. What this actually means is that they are fucking desperate. They are a company that deals with compensation claims from Cumbrian farmers who have had their animals destroyed because of all this foot and mouth shit. If you could imagine a more annoyed clientele, you'd be well, pretty imaginative. The claims are about to start pouring in and these guys have just realised that they don't have any plebs to deal with the shit.

I don't
. Well,
do any
but the
bles don't
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XXXXX

There's a fucking great panther in our garden at the moment. I really don't think I have ever seen a cat that big or mean looking. It's new, I don't know where it comes from. Usually, the only feline visitor to ~~xxxx~~ grace our lawn is Lucy, who was run over when she was a wee kitten, and now sports only three legs. She stayed for days underneath our gas tank, until her owners came around and reclaimed her. She's lovely, really pretty and a little bit scared. You feel kind of lucky if she lets you stroke her. I think cats get a bit spoilt sometimes. I'm conducting this survey into the character of cats so that I know what I want when I finally become 30 year old spinster cat woman. Still, nine years to go, cats might have evolved into something else by then. Felixus Novus.

XX

CONTINUED....

"So, where do you wanna do this then?"

"Uh, there are some pretty cool abandoned warehouses about 10 minutes west of here"

We zoom off towards the warehouses together. Me and Morrissey.

He's looking moody in the bland sunlight. I venture a question.

"So, why was it that you moved to LA?"

"Cos people in Manchester kept looking at me when I laughed. There's only so long you can be northern and depressed."

"Uh huh". Snap. Snap.

"I became this kind of totem for people in England. Everythings OK, if Morrisseys still depressed. You get sick of that. I wanted to come out here where being depressed is wierd and you can fix it with a little pill"

"OK"

"I drive him back to his offices and watch him go through the door."

* * * * *

ENGLAND

3

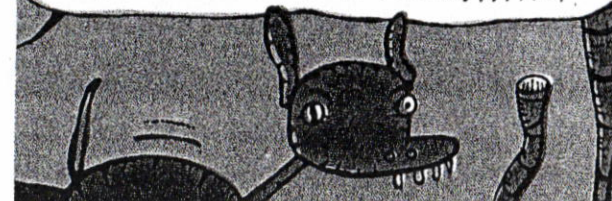
I have a friend called James. Not that I have ever met he I mean she is a friend that I met over the internet. She one of those new American girls that favour thick, 50's st glasses and wears her hair in a long bob that exposes her whitely freckled forehead. She permanently looks as if s has just finished making intellectualism a pornographic activity. She looks as if she had once been into alternative music, but is now content just to stay in with Rilke and Kierkegaard and 'oranges' are not the only fruit by Janet Winterson.

She has a webcam, that's what.

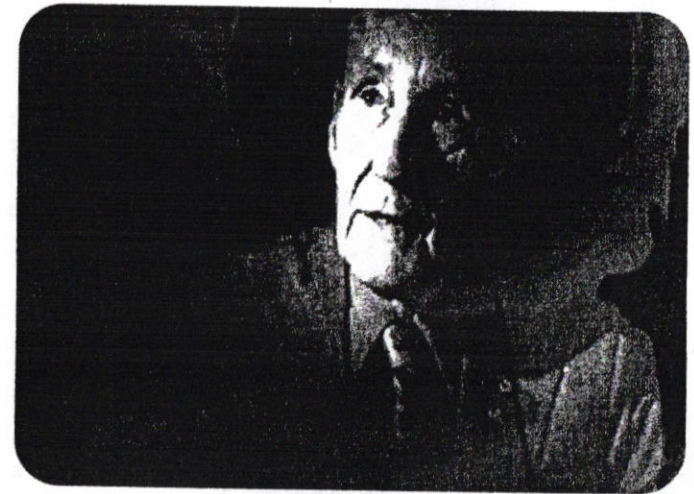
I'm looking at now.

She broadcasts herself 24 hours a day. She tells me that likes to be looked at because then she feels less alone, a that NYC is the lonliest place in the world. She spies on people in her apartment block, and makes up little stories about her lives and loves.

that's my dog "fredrics" a fine dog
cept fer one small aspect just one
small item about "fredrics".....



I mostly like to watch her sleep. Her face reminds me of my own. It's like peering through the door of my childhood bedroom and seeing them sleeping soundly and, free of weight and thoughts. It is like watching an alternate version of myself, sleeping and luminous on the other side of the globe.



Yes, thanks for all the memories—

HI



This is a picture of me. Just so that you know who to direct your vitriol towards. My favourite things are 1) Douglas Coupland (these are in no particular order), 2) My mum's clogs, 3) Archaeology programmes on TV, 4) Inspiration: from others or from myself, 4) Riding in the cart that gets pulled by the pony that looks like me, 5) Bruised skies... 6) Radio 4

Things I don't like are 1) tedium, 2) Jim Davidson, 3) People saying "try and get some sleep", like they do when some major event has happened in a soap. Like when Karl Kennedy got lost in the bush, and everyone was encouraging Susan to "get some sleep", but she couldn't because her husband was lost in the bush

XX

Thought I'd enlighten you as to why Sri Lanka's lights go out for an hour and a half every day. Regard the diagram below.

Sri Lanka is
powered by
Hydro-Electric
dams

No rain has
fallen, thus
the dams do not
generate electr-
icity

No rain - No
leccy - No lites

Portsmouth, England

An officious, military looking man in the town square saw that we had briefly stopped and began a sort of stilted one-way conversation with us. He seemed very anxious to tell us about the great pointless wonders of our city. Jamie patiently held my hand while this guy fidgeted and joked, but then even Jamie got bored.

"Look Carol, we have to get to Tesco's before it shuts, lets go".

Just then this guy points to this grey cement modernist style building with skinny little windows. To be honest with you, it's a building that I have always found ugly. Too much concrete.

"Not many people know" he said "that the windows of this building spell out 'Welcome to Portsmouth' in binary code. Do you know what binary code is?"

I told him that Jamie was a software engineer, so code was a main topic of conversation in our house.

"Two windows together are a nought and a window on it's own is a one"

We stared at this secretive building together. Then Jamie tugged on my sleeve.

"Come on Carol, I'm meeting Jack tonight

* * * * *

Vancouver, Canada

I wake up after a night spent struggling with the effects of jet-lag. The sun is streaming through the window. My head feels like shit. I shiver as I pull back the covers and blindly stumble into the kitchen to make some coffee. I listen to the ansa-machine as I stir in the milk.

"You have 8 new messages" it informs me

I listen to them. My mother wants me to go and see her when I have the time. She says she misses me and thanks me for the presents that I fed-exed her from Britain.

There is one message that makes me laugh. Some one obviously getting the wrong number, apologising and then laughing loudly with their friend on the other end of the line.

I finish making the coffee and go and sit in my living room. Everything is the same way I left it three weeks ago, except fresher seeming for not having seen it all for a while. I can smell the way that my house smells to other people as well. It smells kind of cold and fresh. Like perfume that has been deep-frozen. I look out at the yard and my car. It feels good to be back in the new world.

Southport, England

6

My mum holds my hand as I cry into my pillow. But that doesn't matter, because one day she won't be here any more. One day I won't be here any more. Yesterday was safe but today the world turned bad. Yesterday I was playing with Jemma by the pond in the back garden, but today things are so much bigger than I thought they were. It's like I am fighting my way out of a pillow case, in the dark.

* * * * *

7

Washington State, USA

A sleek blue car pulled up at the lights. I shifted my stance slightly so that I could see my reflection in its windows. I looked haggard. The bulky drawings that I was taking to show my lecturer were snug under my arm. From behind the bubble glass, behind my reflection I could see a little girl with a shiny bob making faces on the window. She caught my eye and smiled and waved. I smiled back, not wanting to attract attention to myself by waving. Then the car pulled away.

* * * * *

8

Manchester, England

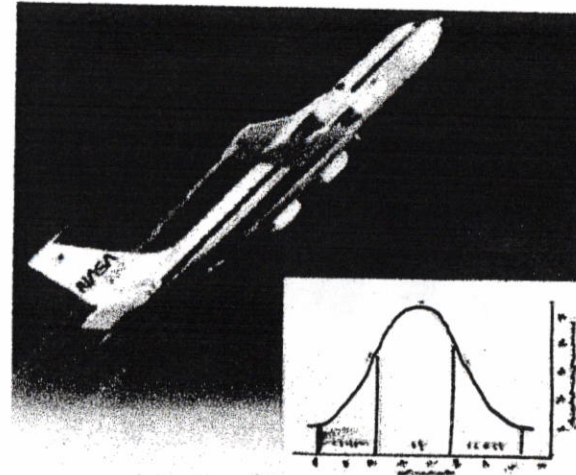
I walked past this drunk man, a tramp with fresh cuts on his face. I was carrying this polystyrene cup of coffee which I spilt all over my hand, causing me to wince momentarily in pain and swear loudly. I transferred the cup to my other hand so as not to get the coffee on my shirt. I looked at this guy again. He was crouching on the floor, leaning against the wall. He was looking at this brand new book that he had bought from the cut-price book shop around the corner. It hadn't even been opened. He was cradling it in his upturned palms, just looking at it. He was treating it with such reverence, like a newborn baby. Eileen from the office came running up to me, breathless. Her long 70's style skirt whipping around her slim ankles. "Afternoon Mr Johnson, how are you today" "Fine Eileen, fine" I said, disturbing my reverie. We walked towards our little concrete building together talking about the love lives of our friends and colleagues

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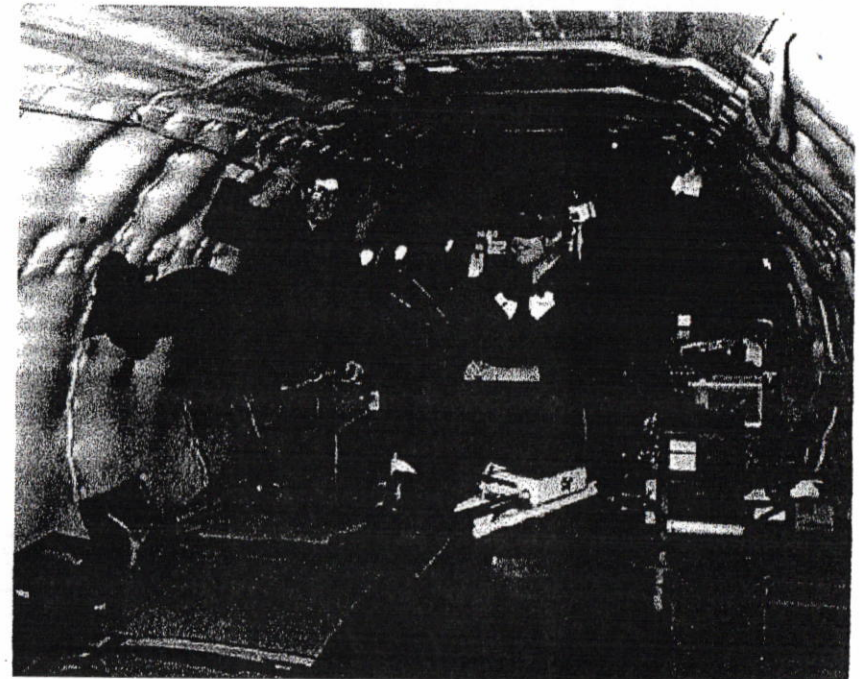
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The Vomit Comet



Visit <http://graybiel.cc.brandeis.edu/parabolic.htm> for more info on this...



down on the blue wipe-clean floor of the hold. She closed eyes and tested each limb in turn. Nervously she tried dipping her shoulder to the right, hoping that the rest of her body would follow. It did. As the plane leveled out, Susan felt her stomach turn over, she reached out to grab a sick bag, but Ivan was too quick for her. He turned his head politely as she retched. When she had finished, he folded the bag and put it in a little box that was attached to the floor.

"How come you don't puke?" she asked.

"Puke?"

She mimed being sick.

"Ah" he said wisely

"I have been in the airforce for ten years, ever since I was 16"

"You're 26?"

"Yes, I look young no?"

"Yes" she smiled

"When I first started I was... puke all the time, but then I think my stomach gets used to no gravity. I am sick now more on the ground than in the air"

"How come you are not in the airforce now, how come you work here?"

"I was hurt in an accident, it meant that I couldn't be in the service anymore. I am sad, but this too is good. I get to talk to people, I never got to do that as an airman, still I miss representing my country."

"...I think my stomach gets used to no gravity..."

Back on terra firma, Susan joined the group to discuss their experience. She thanked Ivan who disappeared quickly into some out buildings. Talking to a tall, brown jumpered Swedish man, Susan tried to express how it had felt to her. "I thought that it felt like a feeling that I felt before" the Swedish man said from behind his square glasses. "Yeah, I know what you mean" agreed Susan. "I don't know when I am feeling this though, seeing as I have never before flown."

"No"

Los Angeles, USA

I brush the crumbs from the Brie and Tomato sandwich I have just eaten onto the grey plasticized gallery floor. It is a strange time of the day, just after lunch when no-one seems to visit and I am alone with gallons of roaring silence and the dust motes that swirl in the sunlight. I think about the artist that I am to meet this afternoon, and the fiery paintings that he wants me to hang on these walls. I remember the dream that I had last night about a tiger which poured itself with liquid ease through an open window of my bedroom. It paced around with terrifying presence while I did my best to pretend that I didn't exist. The dimmed orange light on the bedside table glinted in its eyes and made me think of mysterious secrets and dark, decadent worlds. Worlds like Paris in the 20's; fireworks against a black velvet sky, a sky always threatening to go dark.

* * * * *
THAT'S ALL THE LIVES YOU'RE
GETTING FOR ISSUE #1

⇒ MAYBE ANOTHER 4 LIVES
IN ISSUE #2, DEPENDING ON
WHETHER OR NOT I CAN BE
BOTHERED.

I've just remembered
what he reminded me
of... Malted Milk
biscuits. Of course.

The intercom crackled again. "Ladies and Gentlemen, we have now reached the requisite... requisite 40,000 feet. We will be making a series of 13 paraboles, before landing. Please prepare yourself."

Ivan moved expertly around the plane. Susan felt her stomach knot up. Ivan was using wide straps to attach himself to the floor.

He indicated that she should kneel down and put her hands by her head. She did as she was instructed. She felt her chest tighten and her heart beat faster for a moment, and then she found herself banging into the padded ceiling. Ivan's hands came from nowhere and held onto her legs so that she did not flip upside down. As she was beginning to get a feel for this weightlessness, the plane took a level trajectory and Susan was brought back down to earth.

Measure miles and days.
And the cold spaces left by
Your withdrawing breath.

By Ann Coates

Sitting waiting for the next parabole, Susan considered how this was possible. She recalled the promotional literature and how she had become obsessed with the idea of feeling like an astronaut or a bird for a few seconds. 'This is done by taking the plane to a great height, 40,000 feet to be exact, and then making a series of paraboles.' The picture from which this scientific wisdom was supposed to be emanating featured a ruddy faced Russian man, presumably the Captain. Susan wondered whether he was in the cockpit at that very moment. 'A parabole is a sharp dip which causes the G-force inside the plane to become double for about 5 seconds and then disappear completely for 30 seconds. During this time, any object in the hold, unless tied down will be freed from the constraints of gravity, rendering it weightless. In other

"Susan sensed that a young
wife and child were waiting
at home"

words, they fly.'

The plane dipped sharply again. This time Susan was ready for it. As soon as she felt herself make contact with the

PARABOLIC
By Beth T ilston

The grey cargo plane taxied down the runway, its huge wheels hardly even registering the long hairline cracks that played across the concrete.

Susan stood nervously in line, listening to the jovial voice of the Russian woman who stood at the front of the group.

"You will probably be sick" the woman said, her voice heavily accented. "but you will be sick with a glad heart."

The group laughed along nervously, aware of the protocol of the occasion.

"Each of you will be assigned a helper. Don't worry, they are all professionals. They are all highly trained." She pointed to a square-jawed man on her right. "Erik here has done it at least twice"

More nervous laughs.

"And now we are making our way to the plane." The group, including the blue suited helpers walked the hundred yards to the aeroplane.

Stepping inside, Susan felt someone take her elbow. She turned around and saw a young man of about 20 standing next to her. He had a gentle face. Susan sensed that a young wife and child were waiting at home.

"I'm Ivan" he said, smiling widely.

"Hi Ivan" Susan looked around at the inside of the plane. It was empty bar a soft floor that had been installed after

it had come out of military service, she supposed.

The captain made an announcement over the intercom.

"Ladies and Gentlemen. Welcome to Parabolic flights Ltd. We hope that your flight today will be a pleasant one. Those of you who have flown with us before, welcome back. If you are new to us then we hope this will not be the last time that we see you. You will undoubtedly begin to feel sick at sometime during the flight. Don't worry, this is normal. Please try and use the sick bags provided.

Susan sat quietly, smiling softly as Ivan made small talk in his broken English.

ASTA

As for me
I could leave the world
with today
in my eyes.

Truman Capote

MA
INDE

Captain
Steubling

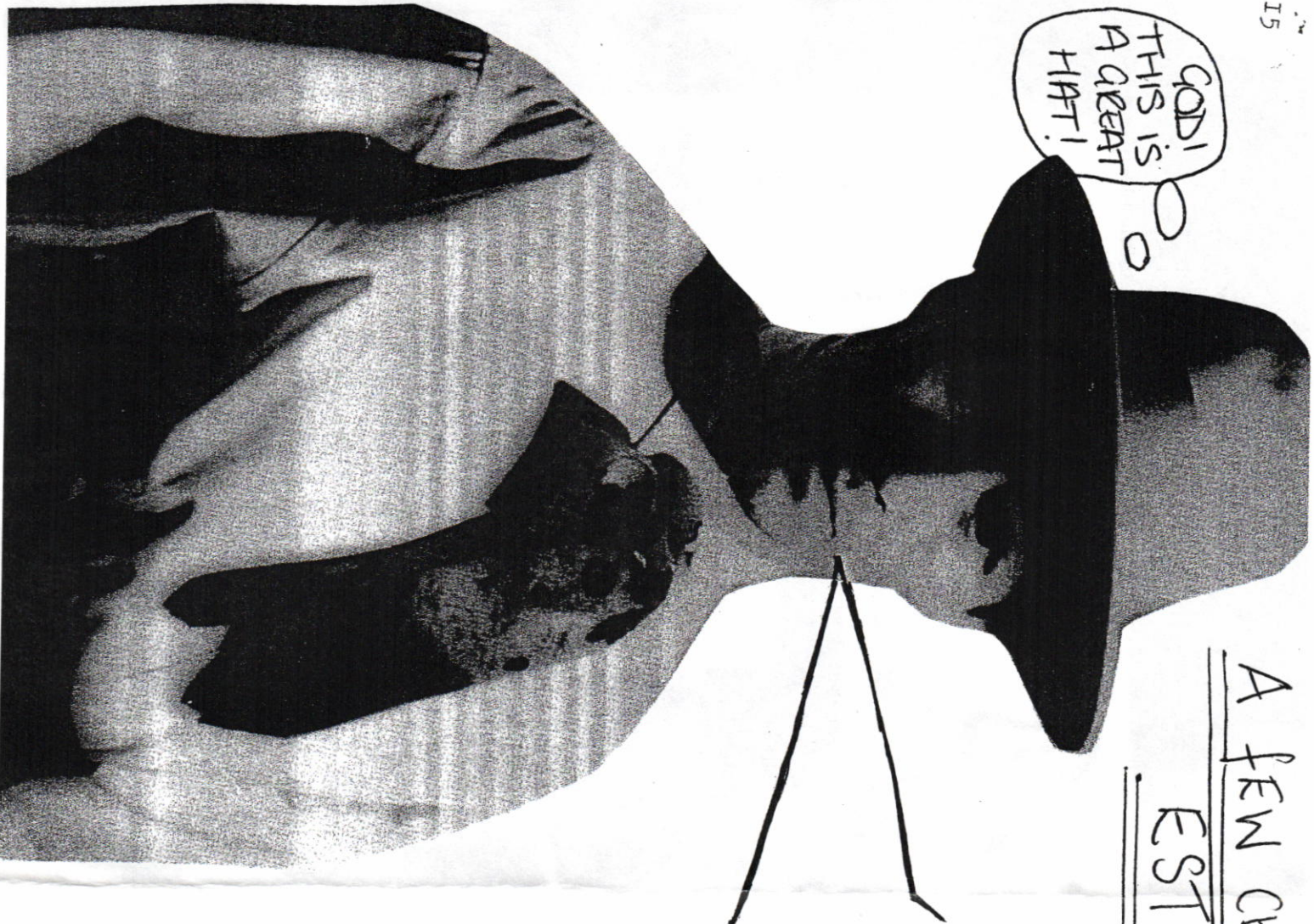
DA LETTA

By Beth Milston

COOKIES

A few cr
EST

GOD!
THIS IS
A GREAT
HAT!



She smelled like cookies the first time I met her. She confessed that that particular day she had run out of her usual Pears soap, and had been forced to use some of her much younger sisters vanilla flavoured bubble bath as a replacement.

"It's funny that it's a flavour though" she said as we walked through the park.

"Why's that?" I asked

"Well, 'cos you don't eat it, do you?"

"No, I guess not" I replied

We thought for a second.

"How would you describe it then?" I asked.

"A smell?"

"Vanilla smelling bubble bath, it doesn't quite have the same ring to it, does it?"

"Well, I don't know then" A hint of anger entered her voice and she was quiet for a moment. We walked up the main street dodging a desperate looking man with a clip-board.

"Go on then... I've answered you"

"What" she looked back at me.

"What first attracted you to me?"

She looked at me beatifically and then said "I liked that you could grow a proper beard."

"Is that all?"

"Is that all" "Well obviously, there were other things too, but they came after the beard" "Oh"

CONTINUED...

I started from the top of the page that I had dog-eared, taking note of the way that I had folded the soft paper of the page. I picked up from the paragraph that I had been reading a couple of hours earlier on the train to work. The narrator, Tyler had been musing on the state of his mother's interior landscape after a particularly acrimonious divorce.

Everytime I reached this ~~my~~ passage, I would consider my interior landscape, should I one day become American and be allowed to use this phrase. I imagined a pre-historic jungle, shot in technicolour. Several quiet dinosaurs would chev slowly on my interior leaves. Or it could be a floodlit golf course. Flat and Hollow. Upon which ~~the~~ oxygen is suspended in the shock of the blue light. But let's face it. My insides would be more likely to look like a bit of scrub land in the middle of some industrial estate that a dodgy guy once intended to build a car park on, but then couldn't be arsed.



WHAT'S
WRONG WITH
ME? —
I DIDN'T UNDER-
STAND CATCHER
IN THE RYE

VOICE WORDS FROM OUR FORMER EDITOR...

OK kidz, what d'ya reckon so far? I know it's lacking in illustrations a bit, but then it is a lit-zine after all. Maybe that's something I need to work on for the next issue. If anyone's a good artist or photographer and wants to send me some illustrations (photocopiable ones obviously), then send them to the address on the back cover.

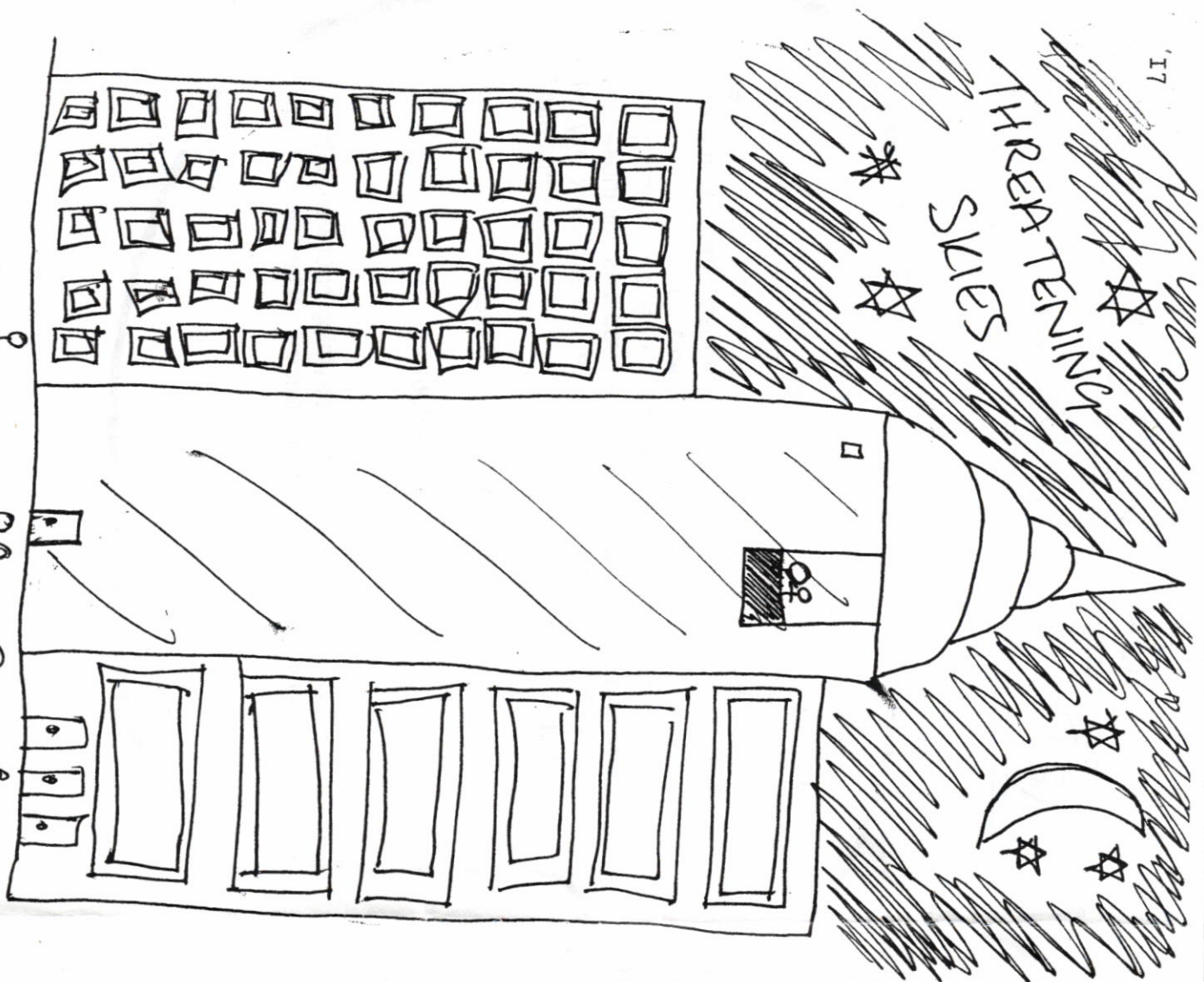
I'm in two minds about this zine. I can't decide whether to make it all my own work - I don't know what you kids call those kind of zines - or have other people contribute. I mean obviously, when I first start, it's gonna be difficult to get people to submit stuff. I dunno, what do other people think?
Well, continuez tout droit.

Love Beth

xxx

P.S. - Does anyone know anything bout Mexico?

P.P.S. - I'm well aware of the crappy standard of my French



THIS WAS DONE
BEFORE STEP 1
INSUBSISTIVE. I MAY BE
PSYCHIC.

of the houses and shops made me feel as if I were in a rain forest. I pulled some of the cheese out from the middle of my sandwich, not wanting to really bite into it until I had settled myself on a bench.

Chewing meditatively by the pond, my thoughts flitted briefly from what an unmitigated butt-kisser I was at school to the hundreds of little moles like unexploded time bombs on my back. I closed my eyes and looked into the sun. My eyelids glowed orange.



I got hotter and began to feel rather cooked. Turning my face away from the immediate glare of the sun, I considered the vitamin D that the light was causing my body to make. I can't help thinking of my body chemistry as a jumble of letters and numbers and reactions. The messy chaotic reality always takes me by surprise.

My body has been good to me, and has doesn't complain, no matter what I do to it. It just keeps on doing its thing, even when I don't ask it to. It's rather like the annoying girl at university who would turn up to go out with us even when we didn't ask her, even when we went to great pains to avoid her.

I pulled my book roughly out of my bag. A bag that I made myself it should be noted. The corners of the front covers are ragged and soft from the number of times that I have read it. The book is "Shampoo Planet" by Douglas Coupland. Not one of his best I will admit, but still, it holds a place in my heart.

Vitamin D

The change was growing hot and embarrassing in my hand when I stepped up to the counter to order my sandwich. I was trying to look nonchalant and sophisticated and spending an inordinate amount of time perusing the soft drinks, the way I generally do when I am queuing on my own.

Too late to prepare myself, I noticed that the guy behind the counter was someone I had gone to school with. Someone I had been quite friendly with to be honest. We regarded each other awkwardly, unsure of the power dynamic that we were supposed to enter into.

"Hi Daniel, haven't seen you in a while" he said chirpily.

"No, not for a long time" I agreed "What have you been doing with yourself?"

"This and that" he said dismissively. Sensing the growing crowd behind us he became business like. "So, what can I do for you?" he said, trying to sound as friendly as possible but just succeeding in making us both feel uncomfortable.

"Just a cheese baguette please mate."

"OK, I'll bring it over to you." He turned his attention to the fat lady behind me in the queue.

I felt rather bad about calling him 'mate', since this is a greeting that I reserve for homeless people and old acquaintances whose names I have momentarily misplaced and am therefore being guiltily over friendly with.

He brought the sandwich over, but by this time I had decided to take my food to the park. The rain of the morning had stopped and the sun was shining weakly through the cloud cover. The drip drip of the rainwater from the gutters

Hercule Poirot, Agatha Christie's fastidious Belgian sleuth has found his way into the 21st Century. How or why is unimportant. Suspend your disbelief for a moment...

POIROT'S NEW FRIEND

Hercule Poirot picked up the bulbous white telephone with the tips of his fingers and looked at it with disdain. His moustache moved a little sending a paroxysm of twitches down the left side of his impeccably besuited body.

"Someone walk over your grave Poirot" said Hastings with a smirk.

"And where is the dial"? Poirot gestured wildly with the telephone, his head moving slowly to look Hastings full in the eyes.

"They don't have dials now Poirot, you press those little buttons and they get you through to who you want to talk to."

"You don't have to speak to an operator first?"

"No, straight through."

"Mon Dieu, how is it done?"

"It's, well they, They've got... Do you know, I don't know Poirot. It's just one of those things you just accept"

Poirot pressed the number into the telephone as if it was a cadaver that he was checking for signs of life. His eyes glazed over as he waited for someone to answer. Finally, it was picked up. He was jolted out of his reverie with a start.

"Ello, ello this is Hercule Poirot... Ello.... I, um.... ello?." He stared at the telephonic bug angrily.

"This woman that I am wanting to phoning, she just says things to me and then hangs up. Mon dieu, the rudeness of the people nowadays. She didn't even let me speak" He was angry and

Well *
Manoeuvre

seemed to shake a little in spite of his ironed visage.

"That was probably an ansa-fone Poirot"

"What's this?"

"Well it's when a machine takes a message for you if you are not there, and then you can play it back and listen to it."

"So, you speak to a machine?"

"Yes, basically."

"Ah, it has come to this. Where are the old ways?"

Poirot seemed pleased that London had not changed a great deal.

"It is dirtier" He said "But then it was always dirty, perhaps more so than now. The gentlemen have changed though. A gentleman always used to wear a Saville Row suit and carry an umbrella. Now I notice that they go around with their shirts untucked, or have these horrendous pullovers that they wear"

Sitting in the plush living room of a large house in Kensington, Poirot seemed content.

"Things have not changed that much. Still the people they get jealous. Still the ones who are poor want what the rich have. People are not so very different. There is still much work for the little grey cells of this aged Belgian to do."

A sombre, long-skirted girl rushed into the room, agitated. She was beautiful, despite the grey pallor that had taken her face. She looked as if she might be a violinist in the Philharmonic, or an expert at growing roses.

Despite her young age, she had great gravitas and dignity. Poirot smiled briefly to himself. 'Always the beautiful ones' need the help of old Hercule', he thought slyly to himself. 'Always the beautiful ones'.

"I wouldn't have contacted you Poirot, but it's my brother you see"

"And what has happened to your brother Mademoiselle"

"Well, he's gone missing you see. He's a politician and he'd been having this stupid little affair with this hawt in the west and

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All of these snippets were taken from Mondo 2000, a magazine that advertises itself as featuring CY BERTUNK - VIRTUAL REALITY - VIRTUAL SEX - CHAOS - WEYWARE - DESIGNER APHRODISIACS - HACKERS & CRACKERS and TECHNOEROTIC PAGANISM. A book of this magazine is available. ISBN 0-500-27749-4

THE TANG DYNASTY

The other day I was reading some Tang poets, Li Po and Du Fu, and I thought to myself, "I'm in the Tang dynasty," as in people who have grown up drinking Tang, this simulated, completely artificial orange-juice product. Pop culture is as much a part of me as the color of my eyes. It's not like I'm making a choice about whether or not to acknowledge it or comment on it. I'm literally made of it. It is me.

MUSIC COMES FROM A CULTURE'S MACHINERY

About twenty-five years ago, some friends of mine in the Village were kicking around a notion about the correlation between sounds and music styles—like country music, it's horseback music. It has the kind of feel you get on a horse. Bluegrass is cylinder piston engine music. That's why it works so well in the *Bonnie and Clyde* chase scene—you can hear the motors running. The sounds of Frank Sinatra and the crooners of the forties are the sounds of a big TWA Super Constellation with the motors going. And then the Beatles came out. It was like jet sounds, like a jet engine revving up.

creation of robots which can build copies of themselves. At the time it was not clear if this was theoretically possible. Working with mathematician and H-bomb guru Stan Ulam, von Neumann developed the idea of cellular automata as a model "toy universe" in which computations could live and reproduce. This led to a proof that robots really can build more robots that make new robots, meaning that robot self-reproduction is



theoretically possible. Working with mathematician and H-bomb guru Stan Ulam, von Neumann developed the idea of cellular automata as a model "toy universe" in which computations could live and reproduce. This led to a proof that robots really can build more robots that make new robots, meaning that robot self-reproduction is

Lounging on a bed in a half-lit room with my best friend.

An unknown man, strangely youthful and alluring is there too, dressed in a deep green military uniform, his body oily and fluid. And a mulatto boy with bright eyes stands at the end of the bed tossing from hand to hand what seems to be a hand grenade. We lie in the hum of the light and grin at each other. My head is hot with grief. A river a mile deep flows beneath the tiled floor of the Mediterranean room that we are in.

We stand here, the four of us, overlooking this Stalin-esque gladiatorial stadium. There are acres of concrete and gradient and people. It is huge, monolithic in size. Almost incomprehensible. The smell of motor oil fills the air. I take a cable car to the highest point and look down on even my friends. I have to bribe the guard to get in the gondola at all. I argue with him through greasy, scratched glass, a luke-warm breeze whipping at my skirt. There are several more military personnel standing behind me, listening without interest to what I was say. They are wearing blue uniforms, not the deep green of my friends. And they have complexions of raw pastry and seem made entirely of dirty air.

Down below, in the stadium, something is happening. I can't work out what it is. I can't see far enough. And then suddenly it seems as if I was watching all of this on TV. I shift back a dimension, the world gets pixelated.

kitchen and returned with a tray. She took three mugs of steaming tea and placed them on the table. Faced with a mug and, worse, a spoon, Poirot blanched. He removed the offending object from the receptacle with a wince and began to delicately sip at his beverage.

The girl commenced her story.

"I got an e-mail from him the other day, but I mean, it might not have been from him. How am I to know? Oh, it is so confusing. I just want him to come back. I can't lose any more of my family"

Poirot turned to Hastings. "What is this e-mail that she speaks of?"
 "Well, it's kind of like a letter but you send it via a computer on the telephone lines"
 "Computer?"

The girl, Anne Marie Devon to be precise, led him quietly to a back room where an I-Mac was set up on a polished wooden desk. She brushed the mouse with her palm and the beast sprang to life.

"This is a computer" she said "You type stuff on it like you used to do on a type writer"
 "So it is for letters? Our typewriters were much smaller. Technology has gone backwards"
 "Well it is for letters" She replied "but you can do so much more on one than just write letters. If it's powerful enough you can do just about anything."

"But it has not yet solved a crime" Poirot said unquestionably "And this e-mail, it is done on this machine"

"Yes"

"Ah, so there is no need to even see another human face anymore with one of these machines. It can become your friend, your colleague"

"Well, I wouldn't go that far old chap" Hastings interrupted. Poirot, ignoring him carried on.

"And how does it work? How is all of this crazy stuff done"

"Well" Anne Marie replied "it has memory and files where it stores all its data and you just call it in"

21 order and deduction. I think this computer and I /will become best friends."

"And your brother?" said Poirot, suddenly recovering himself. "He has sent you one of these electronic letters to say that he is of good health"

"Yes"

"Could I see?"

Poirot watched with reverence as Anne Marie called up her brother's email.

"Yes, yes, everything comes one after another. So ordered, so precise. So Hercule. And this message, you can't tell where it was sent from?"

"No, not the actual place, I mean it was sent from cyberspace"

Poirot studiously ignored rising to the obvious bait and carried straight on.

"Dear Annie" he read in that curious little voice of his "Just a note to let you know that I'm safe and well and that I'll be home soon".

Anne-Marie fled the room crying.

"What is the matter?" Poirot asked her when he had coaxed her back to the couch.

"He never called me Annie" she replied "That's what my mother called me, to my brother I was always Marie"

"And your mother?" Poirot asked politely

"Dead since we were children"

Hurriedly making his good-byes, Poirot whispered quietly to Hastings "I think we should pay a visit to this young lady in the West End of London."

Her flat, a small grubby affair with steep stone steps was resented when the two venerable sleuth's arrived. Pushing on the door, they found it to be open. Poirot led the way into the living room.

"I don't think we should be doing this old chap, I mean, we could get arrested"

"Ah no, the police, they will understand" said Poirot, absent mindedly picking up a gift wrapped box from the hall table and removing the lid. He removed a rubbery object and brandished it at

Hastings who coloured to a bright puce. "What is this?" he demanded. "yet another modern invention. Another thing that means that human beings do not have to spend time with each other" "Well... of sorts" Hastings replied...

Have we spun forward into the past yet?

NEXT TIME:

- How will Poirot's moustache go down in Old Compton Street?
- How will Hastings explain to Poirot what he is holding?
- Will he choose a Bacardi Breezer instead of his usual Creme de Menthe?

This is like being in a galactic blender!

THE ANSWER TO ALL THESE AND OTHER GRIPPING CONUNDRUMS IN THE NEXT EPISODE OF 'POIROT'S NEW FRIEND' IN ISSUE #2 OF 'ALL MY HEROES ARE VIRGINS'.

Why am I hurrying if I don't know if I'll be early or late?